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A Brief Account,

OF THE

Nature, Riſe, and Progreſs,

OF THE

SOCIETIES,

FOR

Reformation of Manners &c.

IN

ENGLAND and *IRELAND:*

WITH A

PREFACE,

Exhorting to the *Uſe of ſuch SOCIETIES*

In *SCOTLAND.*

EDINBURGH,

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TO THE

READER.

IT'S the general Regrate, of all Sober and Virtueous Persons, that notwithstanding of all the obligeing *Methods*, God hath used with us, and the choice *Means* he hath afforded us, for reforming our Lives, yet Prophaneness and immoral vices, do too much abound in City and Country. We have enjoyed the clear light of the Gospel for many years: We have been tryed with severe Judgments, War, Sickness and Dearth: and we received wonderful Mercies and Deliverances: And yet we grow no better. It is true, after our late wonderful deliverance, Popery disappeared for a time, but Immorality and Prophaneness kept their ground; yea, amongst some did encrease. Whence can this be? We have as excellent Laws, against Vice, and Prophaneness, as any Nation; we have Government, and Discipline, in the Church, fitted to restrain, or reform the vitious: Our King and Parliament have, of late improven former Laws, against Vice: and the Council given an Abstract of the penal Laws, and ordered the publick reading of them, in Churches, and issued out Proclamations, requireing the vigorous execution of them: Our Generall Assemblies have made diverse excellent Acts against Prophaneness, and given serious Admonitions, to all ranks of people to reform, and excited Ministers and Sessions to the vigorous execution of Discipline; and there have been, frequent solemn Fasts, and Humiliations, and Engagements to Reformation: And yet the wicked do wickedly, to the great Dishonour of God, and Reproach of our holy Religion. Is there not cause to fear, least such a deludge of ungodliness, overfloweing all Banks, provocke God to sweep us away, with a deludge of wrath, and Judgment? Would it not become all, who fear God, or have any honour for Religion, or Love to the Welfare or Safety, of their Country, seriously to enquire and consider, whence this is, and what is yet wanting and what may be done *yet more* to

reſtrain Vice, and to reform a degenerate Age, and prevent our Ruine. I know, its commonly complained of, that tho there be good Laws, there is no due execution of them; And it cannot be denyed, there is in many places, a great neglect thereof, by diverſe Magiſtrates, and inferior Rulers. But I am afraid, there is an other great Defect; whereof many are guilty, who little *think* of it, even that *private Perſons* do not their duty, not only in their neglect of perſonal and Family-Reformation, but in their not endeavouring to reform others, or to promove the Execution of the Laws againſt them, who are openly vitious. It is true, the Law is not executed, but it is as true, there is not due *Information* given, of them, who tranſgreſs. Few are of a publick Spirit, or have any Sence, that they are concerned with others their Sin or Salvation, living too like, as if they would ſay with *Cain am I my Brothers keeper*: Few have a due ſence, that they are under divine Obligation, for the duty of Brotherly Reproof, tho enjoyned with a weighty Reaſon. *Levit*: 19. 17. *Thou ſhall not hate thy Brother in thy heart, thou ſhalt in any ways rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him. Or* (as on the margine of our Bibles) *that thou bear not Sin for him*) and, if the neglect of it be *hatred, that* maketh guilty of Soul murder. It is true, the name of an *Informer* is with ſome odious, but they conſider not our Saviours Command, *Matt*: 18. 17. to *tell the Church* when no private means are effectual: Nor do they duely ponder what was enjoyned, for informing the Magiſtrate of, and not concealing groſs Tranſgreſſors *Deut*: *ch.* 13. v. 8. and *Levit*: 5. v. 1. *If a Soul, ſin and hear the voice of ſwearing and is a Witneſs, whether he hath ſeen or known of it, if he do not utter it, then he ſhall bear his iniquity.* It were to be wiſhed, there were a more deep and due Sence of this on peoples Hearts, and how much the Salvation of other Souls from eternal Ruine, and the preſerving the Nation from Ruineing Judgements, may depend on it, and how the Neglect of it, may involve them in the guilt of being *acceſſory* to both. It is undenyable, that Vice is the great Enemy of Mankind: The deſtroyer of Souls and Societies: but tho there be many who will acknowledge this, and wiſh for reformation, and confeſs the excellency and Neceſſity of it, yet few have the Courage to attempt it: Men are generally full of objections and Apprehenſions of difficulty, and hopeleſs of ſucceſs: Nor can they conceive, what private perſons can do. Tho the higher the *Tide* of wickedneſs be, the more need there is to oppoſe it; And there being ſuch abſolute neceſſity of reformation

on for preventing our Ruine, it would become all, who love this Church, and Nation to take Courage and resolutely to sett to the use, of all *Possible means* for a General and National Reformation, as we would do to quench *the Flames* kindled in our houses: and we, of this Nation, seem to have some special *opportunities*, advantages and encouragements for it;

Nor should we give it over as hopeless, seing we see by the example of some publick-spirited private persons, that the thing is *practicable* and their example should provoke us to Emulation in a hearty Concern for Religion; God having put it in the heart of some good publick-spirited persons, to enter in Societies, for reformation of manners: tho' it began amongst some private persons, God hath made the designe to take effect, by blessing it with success, of which we have account, in a late excellent Book called an *Account of the Societies for Reformation of manners in London, and Westminster, and other parts, of the Kingdom*; and in an other, Entituled, *An account of the rise and progress of the Religious Societies in the City of London &c. and of the endeavours for reformation of manners, which have been made therein.*

Books well worthy of the perusal of all, who desire the reformation of the manners of their People: And because the Books are not commonly to be had, I have subjoyned a summary Account of them, and the cheif things contained therein. By which it will appear, how much hath been done by *private* Persons, by entring into Societies, for reformation of manners, for promoveing the execution of the Laws against the vitious, and restraining of Vice; And things are brought into such a Method, and tryed by 7 or 8 years experience, approven by the wise, and most learned in the Nation, and some of these of the highest Character, and the success so comfortable, that it may excite and encourage these of this Kingdom of *Scotland*, to imitate so laudable an example. And may it not be hoped, that the more wise, and sober part, of the Nation would promote so good a design, and encourage and assist any, who would enter into such Societies for Reformation.

Neither is there any the least umbrage, for jealousy, or fear of any prejudice thereby, either to the Church, or State; But much advantage, seing they pretend to no Authority, or Judiciarie Power, but to *consult and endeavour* in subserviencie to the Magistrate, to promove the execution of the Law, by the respective Magistrates; And they who neglect, or discourage such endeavours, may *thereby* make *themselves*

ſelves guilty of the continueing prophaneneſs of this Age, and the Nations Ruine *thereby*. Whereas, they who zealouſly contribute their endeavours for Reformation, may be publick Bleſſings; be accepted of God, and have much ſweet Peace in themſelves, and be means of the Kingdoms Proſperity and welfare. I ſhall not detain the Reader, from the forementioned Account, of theſe two excellent Books; But my prayer ſhall be to God, that he may inſpire many, with ſuch a publick Spirit, which would be a promiſing ground of Hope, and of much good, to this and the ſucceeding Generation.

A Brief

A Brief Account,

Of the Nature, Riſe, and Progreſs, of the Societies,

FOR

Reformation of Manners &c.

In ENGLAND & IRELAND.

THis Book is Publiſhed with *Approbation*, of Twenty Nine *Noblemen*, Nine *Biſhops*, and Seven *Judges* of *England*; who do all Subſcribe the following Letter to the *Author*.

SIR,

WE *have peruſed the Book you ſent us, Entituled,* An Acount of the Societies for Reformation of Manners; *the* Deſign *of which is ſo truely Great and Noble, ſo much for the Honour of GOD, the Advancement of Piety and Virtue, and the Publick Good both of Church and State, that it cannot fail of being approved by all Good Men.* The Method *likewiſe propoſed, in order to the Promoting and Accompliſhing the ſaid Deſign, is, We conceive, moſt proper, and (by the Bleſſing of GOD attending it) moſt likely to prove effectual. And that Pious Men of all Ranks and Qualities may be excited by this good Book to contribute, in their reſpective Places and Stations, their beſt Endeavours, towards a* National Reformation of Manners, *is the moſt Humble and Hearty Prayer of,*

SIR, *Your very Loving Friends*

Lords Temporal.

Pembroke, P
Lonſdale.
Leeds.
Bedford.
Lindſey.
Kent.
Bridgwater.
Thanet.
Radnor.
Abingdon.
Portland.
Falconberg.
Warington.
Rochford.
Say & Sele.
Longvile.
Bergavenny.
Eure.
Willoughby

Lords Temporal.	Cutts.	*Lords Spiritual.*	*Judges.*
Willoughby *of* Parham.			Ed. Ward.
			Ed. Nevill.
Brook.		T. Carliol.	Nic. Lechmere.
Maynard.		H. Bangor.	Tho. Rokeby.
Berkley *of* Stratton.		N. Ceſtrienſ.	John Turton.
Dartmouth.		E. Glouceſtr.	John Blencowe.
Guildford.		S. Elienſ.	Hen. Hatſell.
Haverſham.		J. Briſtol.	
Barnard.		R. Bath & Wells.	
Digby.		J. Ciceſtrienſ.	
Allington.		J. Oxon.	

IN this Book the Author repreſents, *1ſt.* The Power and Duty of Magiſtrates, to puniſh Vice, and the neceſſity not only of Good Laws, againſt Debauchery and Prophaneneſs, but of the Execution of them, for the welfare of Communities, and that it becometh all them, who call themſelves Chriſtians, to promote the ſame. And then proceeds to ſhew, that this is practicable, by what hath been done Eight years before in the City of *London*, and other parts of that Kingdom, where he repreſents how at firſt, it came into the Hearts of five or ſix private Gentlemen of the *Church* of *England*; to engage in that difficult and hazardous interprize: And to reſolve, whatever difficulties they met with, to make their efforts, for promoting the Execution of the Laws, againſt Prophaneneſs and Debauchery; and the ſuppreſſing of them by adviſeable Methods; conſidering they had the Laws of the Land, and the Law of God for them, and would have the Prayers of Good-men on their ſide.

He ſheweth next, how this alarum'd the Enemy, and how the Patrons of Vice, ſet themſelves to Ridicule, Defame and oppoſe the deſigne, and overthrow the hopes and expectations of the undertakers. And that others, who were not Enemies, yet conſulting worldly policie, did by their conduct obſtruct the deſign, and Cenſured the attempt, as an effect of an imprudent and unſeaſonable Zeal. But notwithſtanding of the furious oppoſition of Adverſaries, and neutrality of Friends, theſe Gentlemen, who in a little time, began to add others to their number, not only keeped their Ground, but made further advances, Our late Excellent Queen of Glorious Memory, having the deſigne laid before Her, in the abſence of the King, by the late Biſhop of *Worceſter*: She thanked them, who were concerned in it and promiſed Her aſſiſtance, and afterwards on Application, ſent Her Letter to the Juſtices of *Middleſex*, Commanding them to put the Laws againſt Prophaneneſs and Vice, in Execution, with all Fidelity and Impartiality——— And particularly, that they ſhould encourage Informers; but they ſuffered a great loſs by

by her death; yet the Undertakers, were not discouraged. For as they first set about it, with litle or no expectation of such a Patroness, and because they thought it would be acceptable service to the King of Kings, and that it would promote the true Interest of Religion, and the Welfare of the Country: So the same considerations, oblieged them to pursue their designe, with equal vigour and Zeal, tho' they were deprived of so great a Friend and Protector. And Divine providence seemed to favour their endeavours, by the great and remarkable success which attended them; For a multitude of Offenders, hath been by their means, brought to punishment, the publick opposition that was at first, made to their undertaking defeated, and the honesty of it recommended to the Vertuous, and unprejudiced part of the Nation, whom the accounts of these matters had reached.

They encreased in number, by the addition of Persons of considerable Note, and of the best Character, some of whom, tho they were of different opinions, from the Established *Church*; did engage in this Noble designe for the common Cause of Christianity: And by their joint endeavours, great advances have been made, towards a Reformation of *Manners*; which is every day getting Ground: Persons of Various Ranks, of considerable Fortunes, and of the clearest Character, offering their Assistance to it, not only in and about the City of *London*, but from several parts of the Kingdom.

Afterwards, the Author giveth a short Scheme of the designe, and some account of the managers of it, and the advances thereof, that the well disposed part of the Nation, who have hitherto been strangers to it, may by the knowledge thereof be induced to joine in so good a Work, and now especially since this conjuncture (*saith he*) is so favourable, beyond our expectation, to wit, upon the Address of the House of Commons; The King having issued out a Proclamation for preventing and punishing Immorality and Prophaneness.

Take the Scheme *and Account, in the Authors own Words. from* page 10. *to* 28.

There is a very large Body of Persons, compos'd of the *Original Society* beforementioned, with the Additions that have been since made of Persons of Eminency in the *Law*, *Members of Parliament*, *Justices of Peace*, and considerable *Citizens* of *London* of known Abilities and great Integrity, who frequently meet to consult of the *best Methods* for carrying on the Business of *Reformation*, and to be ready to advise and assist others that are already engaged, or any that are willing to join in the same Design.

This *Societie* is at a considerable Yearly Charge for the effectual managing their Business; but takes no Contributions of any but their own Members, by whose Endeavours, as was said before, Thousands of Offenders, in *London* and *Westminster* have been brought to Punishment for *Swearing*, *Drunkenness*, and *Prophanation* of the *Lord*'s-Day; and a great part of the Kingdom has been awakened, in some measure, to a sence of their Duty in this respect, and thereby a very hopeful Progress is made towards a *General Reformation*.

A *Second Society* is of about *Fifty* Persons, *Tradesmen* and others, who have

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more especially applyed themselves to the Suppression of *Lewdness*, by bringing the Offenders to legal Punishment: These may have actually suppressed and roote de out about *Five Hundred Disorderly Houses*, and caused to be punished some *Thousands* of *Lewd Persons*, besides *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, and *Prophaners* of the *Lord's-Day*, as may appear by their *Printed Lists* of Offenders. These Persons, by their prudent and legal Management of their Business, have received great Countenance and Encouragement in our *Courts of Judicature*, and very particular Encouragement and Assistance, for several Years past, from the *Lord Mayor* and *Court of Aldermen*, who are sensible of the great Service that is done by them, which they express upon proper Occasions.

A *Third Society*, is of *Constables*, (of which sort of Officers Care is taken to form Yearly a new Body in this City) who meet to consider, of the most Effectual way to discharge their *Oaths*, to acquaint one another with the *Difficulties* they meet with, to resolve on proper *Remedies*, to divide themselves in the several Parts of the City, so as to take in the whole to the best Advantage, for the inspecting of *Disorderly Houses*, taking up of *Drunkards*, *Lewd Persons*, *Prophaners* of the *Lord's-Day*, and *Swearers*, out of the Streets and Markets, and carrying them before the *Magistrates*; and I must observe, that this is found a very successful Method for *Constables* to take, for the Suppressing of the abominable Sin of *Swearing* when *Private Persons* are negligent in giving of *Informations*, and the *Magistrate* is careless of his Duty.

A *Fourth* Rank of Men, who have been so highly Instrumental in this *Undertaking*, that they may be reckoned a *Corner-Stone* of it, is of such as have made it some part of their Business, to give *Informations* to the *Magistrate*, as they have had Opportunity, of such Breaches of the Laws as were before mentioned. Many of these Persons have given the World a great and almost unheard-of Example, in this corrupt Age, of *Zeal*, and *Christian Courage*, having underwent, at the beginning more especially of these Proceedings, many *Abuses*, and great *Reproaches*, not only from exasperated, and hardned Offenders, but often from their lukewarm Friends, Irreligious Relations, and sometimes from *Unfaithfull Magistrates*, by whom they have been Reviled, Brow-beaten, and Discouraged from performing such important Service, so necessary to the Welfare of their *Country*. And herein these brave Men have acted with so great Prudence, as well as Zeal, that foreseeing it might one day be the Policy of the Enemy of all Goodness and the Business of wicked Men, who are his Instruments, and could not generally be brought to Shame and Punishment for their infamous Practices but by their means, to raise Prejudices in the Minds of bad and unthinking People against them, and to disparage their Proceedings, by whispering of Jealousies of their being influenced in what they did by Worldly Considerations, That the World may be challenged to make appear, that these *Societies* have been so much as treated with, by any Person whatsoever, to give *Informations* with any promise of a reward, or that they have either received the least Advantage by any *convictions* upon these *Statutes* against *Prophaneness* and *Debauchery*, the Money arising thereby being wholly appropriated to

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the poor, except the third part of the Penalty, upon the Statute against *Prophanation* of the *Lord's-day*, which, in some Cases, the *Magistrate* hath a bare power to dispose of; but was never, that we know of, received by any one of these Persons; which I thought fit to observe, as a lasting Answer to any objection of this kind, in justice to them who have gone through *Frowns* and *Reproaches* for the sake of doing so much Good; and that all Men may see with how great Reason it is, both from the Character of the Persons concerned in the Discharging of this Service to *Religion* and their *Country*, as well as from the Nature and Necessity of it, (which I shall hereafter enquire into) that the Name of an *Informer* is now become much more *Glorious* among *wise* and *good Men*, than it was grown *Contemptible*, by the *ill Practices* of *some* in our dayes; And that it does therefore appear truly *Honourable*, for Persons of the *greatest Quality* to give *Informations* in these Cases, for the Service of the most *High God*, as some among us, of *Greater Ranks* than the World does perhaps think of, have of late done. and which it hath been observed, in divers *Discourses* lately Published, that even *Princes* under the *Jewish* Dispensation were not ashamed to do *Ezra* 9. 1, 2. *Now when these things were done, the Princes came to me, saying, the People of Israel, and the Priests and the Levits have not separated themselves from the people of the Lands, doing according to their Abominations*, &c.

There are *Eight* other *regulated* and *mixt Bodies* of *House-keepers* and *Officers*, in the severall Quarters of *London*, *Westminster* and *Southwark*, who *differ* in their *Constitution* from those beforementioned, but generally *agree* in the *Methods* of inspecting the Behaviour of *Constables* and other *Officers*, and going along with them and assisting them in their searching of *Disorderly Houses*, in taking up of *Offenders*, and carrying them before the *Magistrate*, and also in giving *Informations*. themselves. as there is Occasion.

Besides those beforementioned, there are about *Nine and Thirty Religious Societies* of another kind, in and about *London* and *Westminster*, which are propogated into other parts of the Nation; as *Nottingham*, *Glocester &c.* And even into *Ireland*, where they have been for some Moneths since spreading in diverse *Towns* and *Cities* of that Kingdom, as *Kilkenny*, *Drogheda*, *Mannouth*, *&c.* Especially in *Dublin*, where there are about *Ten* of these *Societies*, which are promoted by the *Bishops*, and *inferior Clergy* there. These persons meet often to *Pray*, *Sing Psalms*, and *read* the *Holy Scriptures* together, and to *Reprove*, *Exhort*, and *Edify* one another by their *Religious Conferences*. They moreover carry on at their Meetings, Designs of *Charity*, of different *Kinds*; such as relieving the *Wants* of *Poor House-keepers*, maintaining their *Children* at *School*, setting of *Prisoners* at *Liberty* supporting of *Lectures* and daily *Prayers* in our *Churches*. These are the SOCIETIES, which our late *Gracious Queen*, as the Learned *Bishop*, who hath writ her LIFE, tells us, took so great *Satisfaction* in, that She enquired *often* and *much* about them, and was *glad*, they went on, and prevailed; which, thanks be to GOD, they *continue* to do; as the Reverend Mr. *Woodward*, who hath obliged the world with a very particular Account of the *Rise* and *Progress* of

them, hath lately acquainted us. And these likeways are SOCIETIES that have proved so exceedingly *serviceable* in the work of REFORMATION, that they may be reckoned a chief *Support* to it, as our late *Great Primate* Arch. Bishop *Tillotson* declared, upon severall Occasions, after he had examined their orders, and inquired into their lives, *That he thought they were to the Church of* England.

I might now give an *Account* of a *Societie of Ministers* of the *Church of England*, for carrying on of this work, and another *Agreement* of *Justices of the Peace*: But I am withheld at present by some considerations, from descending to any further *Particulars* concerning them; and must content my self with saying what will be easily allowed, That the stated *Meetings* of such persons are as *proper*, and may be more usefull for the promoting of this *Woork*, than any other I have described. For what might we not expect from the *zealous Endeavours* of these *Orders* of Men in this affair? Which, 'its obvious, will not be imployed, with so great Effect, as when they *form* themselves into *Societies*, or at least have *frequent* and *stated Times* of Meeting, for the *Prosecution* of this Business. 'Tis true that *Ministers* and *Magistrates*, have far greater *Advantages*, as well, as more particular *Obligations*, than others, (as I shall hereafter endeavour to make appear) to be serviceable in this Work of *Reformation*; but yet, when they act alone in this Contention between *Vertue* and *Vice*, tho, they will do great good in our present Circumstances, and much more than they will easily believe till they are heartily engaged in it; yet they must expect to be under Disadvantage on some Occasions, as well as other single Persones, who exert their *Zeal*, without a *Communication* with one another, and particularly, when they encounter *Combinations* of wicked Men, which, it is not unlikely, will sometimes happen. Do we not see by what Methods the *Men of the World* propagate *Wickedness*, and countermine *Good Designes*? Is it not by their *Clubes* and *Confederacies*? Are we not sensible with what Advantage our *Civil Concerns* are carried on by *Companies* and *Corporations*? Nay, Does not the Account before us convince us of the great *Usefulness*, or rather *Necessity*, of Good Mens *confederating* and *meeting* frequently together to concert *Methods*, and *Encourage* one an other in this difficult Work of Confronting and Suppressing of *barefac'd* and *insolent Wickedness*? And that the Reason why *good Men* have not sooner or more generally done it, may be, *Mat.* 16. 8. because *the Children of this World, are in their Generation wiser then the Children of Light.* Since therefore *Union* and *Method* seem evidently to give *good Men* much the same Advantage (abstracting from the Consideration of the Goodness of their Cause, and the Divine Aid that they may expect) in their just and brave *Opposition* to *Prophaneness* and *Immoralities*, against the greater Number, 'tis to be feared of the *Wicked*, as Discipline and good Ground, in War gives a small Body of Men against a very unequal *Number* of those that are undisciplin'd and with disadvantageous Ground; 'tis highly to be wished, That not only *Societies* of *Ministers* and *Magistrates*, but of all other *degrees* of Men, were set up in *Prosecution* of this *Design*, in all Parts of the Kingdom, more especially in all *Towns*, *Cities*, and *Corporations*. And it may charitably be hoped,

ed, that there are but few, if any, such Places, where there are not to be found *Three* or *Four* Persons at least, of one or other Denomination of *Christians*, that have a *Zeal* for GOD and *Religion*, who may easily *form* themselves into a *Society*, which may *enlarge* by degrees, and which will, probably speaking, go a great way towards the Suppressing *Publick Disorders* where they are; but may have a marvellous Effect, with *God's* Blessing, for this End, where there is a *Magistrate* that makes a Conscience of his *Duty*, or a *Minister* that encourages *Reformation*; as would be manifest to any that had observed in how short a time, and to what a degree, *open Wickedness* hath been checkt, where a *Zealous Minister* hath given himself the Trouble, I might rather have said the Pleasure, of meeting sometimes a *Society* of his Parishioners, to encourage their Zeal and Constancy in this Work of *Reformation*, even where the Magistrates have been either open or secret *Enemies* to it. The Advantages moreover are too many to be insisted on in this place. for the Exercising of our own Graces, and the Confirming of our Virtuous Dispositions, by our *Associating* with our Fellow Christians, for the carrying on Religious Designs, in an Age, when Christian Conversation, which hath an inestimable Value with Men, of Religion, is with such Difficulty met with. The forming therefore of Good Men. into such pious *Combinations*, for the overbalancing those of *Vice*, the countermining the contrary *Attempts* of all wicked Men, and recovering the Power, as well as the Form of *Religion*, is most earnestly recommended to all the Friends of Piety and Virtue. And methinks it may be expected from all, that have any sincere regard to GOD'S Honour, their own and their Country's *Happiness*, that they should exert themselves, in their several Capacities, with a noble *Zeal* and *Emulation*, for the perfecting of this great Undering. And now especially, the *Times of Peace* are returned, which we have been told, are the Times of *Reformation*, surely none that carry the Face of Christians, can with Confidence offer new Excuses any longer to postpone it; we may now hope, for the Assistance of some, at least, of the *Cautious* and *Prudent Men* amongst us, who have hitherto, with great Gravity, stood Neuters in this Affair, and that they will at last answer the Expectation of Good Men from them, and suffer the Generations to come. to call them Blessed. 'Tis at least to be hoped, that if they are too Great and too Wise, to ingage in the Work themselves, they will not, however, obstruct it more than the open *Enemies* of it can do, by their calling it an *Impracticable Undertaking*, whispering groundless Jealousies of the Design, or uncharitable aud disadvantageous Characters, of the Persons concerned in the promoting it; but rather, that they will let the World see, that their Zeal is engaged in the carrying on of wiser *Methods*, for the Effecting of a *National Reformation*. And one would think, that the Employing our Labour or Authority in this Noble Design of being Instrumental in doing Good to Multitudes of Souls, by Suppressing the *National Sins*, and, by consequence, the Reviving the Power and Reputation of *Religion*, and thereby Preventing *National Judgements*, should be more worth the Concern and Application of Christians, and should afford a more true and solid Satisfaction than the pursuit of our Wordly Interest or Pleasures.

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All indeed are not Capable of being Serviceable in the same way; but whether it be by *Executing the Laws*, or by *Preaching*, *Discoursing*, *Writing*, *Informing*, *Setting up of Societies*, or otherwise contributing towards it, which way soever it be, that we can further this Glorious Work; it will, I think, be hard to find a good Excuse for any that shall decline their Concurrence, according to their Advantages and Opportunities, in an Undertaking, which it would become the greatest Man upon Earth to promote, which is now so far facilitated, by the *Schemes* that are laid, and the *Methods* it is put into.

We have seen some few Persons, engaging in this Enterprize, before they had any *Methods* to direct them, or many *Examples* to encourage them, encountering *Opposition* in the first Forming their Design, from open *Enemies*, and perhaps false Friends, suffering cruel Mockings, unkind Censures, and unjust Reproaches, and yet not giving way. We have seen them Surmounting their greatest *Difficulties*, so that the main brunt seems now near over, and going on with that *Resolution* and *Success*, that the *Deluge* of *publick Wickedness* is visibly abated. We are told, that many Thousands have been brought to Punishment for *Swearing* and *Cursing*, by their means; Seventy or Eighty Warrants a Week having been executed on these Offenders, in and about this City only, since the late Act of Parliament against *Swearing* and *Cursing* was made, which hath given so great and remarkable a Check to those Scandalous Sins, that our *Constables* sometimes of late have found it difficult, to take up a Swearer in divers of our Streets and Mercats, where, within a few years past, horrid *Oaths Curses*, and *Imprecations*, were heard Day and Night; That a multitude of *Drunkards*, and *Prophaners* of the Lords Day, some of whom kept, as it were, open Markets within a few years past, have been made Examples by their means; that Hundreds of Disorderly Houses, which were little better, than Stews, and Nests for *Thieves*, *Clippers* and *Coiners*, &c. have been rooted out and suppress; and that some Thousands of Lewd Persons have been *Imprisoned*, *Fined*, and *Whipt*: so that the *Tower-End* of the Town, and many of our Streets, have been much purg'd of that *pestilent Generation* of *Night Walkers*, that used to infest them, which were a Reproach to this Noble City, and a Scandal to Christianity; Forty or Fifty of them, having been sent in a Week to *Bridewell*, where they have of late received such Discipline, that a considerable Number of them hath chose rather to be Transported to our *Plantations*, to work there for an honest Subsistence, than to expose themselves, by their lewd way of Living, to *Shame* and *Punishment*, to *Poverty* and *Disease*, to all sorts of wicked Practices, and the Danger of the *Gallows*, to which, in the Conclusion, they are often, if not generally brought. And I may justly add, That far greater Things, by the Application of the *Original Society* of *Gentlemen*, have been accomplished, than what have yet been mentioned, and such as I am not permitted at this time to discover. But thus much may be said, That the Endeavours of those Gentlemen have not been confined to this City and Kingdom, but have extended as far as *Ireland*, where they have had an Influence, very little, I think, to the Honour of that Kingdom, from whence it had its

first

first Rise; of which, since a more particular Account may be expected, I may satisfy my self, at present, with saying in general, of my own Knowledge, That the Translactions of *Reformation* here having been now Two Years since, laid before some few Persons in *Ireland*, and most of those (I must again observe) private Persons, and of the lower Rank of Men, with proper Considerations to move 'em to unite in the same *Design*, and *Methods* to pursue it with Advantage, it determined them to engage heartily in it; and they have prosecuted it with so much Vigour, that there are now several *Societies* for *Reformation* in the City of *Dublin*; which I am assured, by divers Accounts that I have in my Hands from thence, are spreading into several Parts of the Kingdom, and are encouraged, by his Excellency the Earl of *Galloway*, one of the Lords Justices of *Ireland*, the Right Reverend the *Arch-Bishop* of *Dublin*, many of the Clergy, and the best of the *Magistrates* and *Gentlemen* of that City: In One of which *Societies*, most of the *Parish-Ministers* of *Dublin*, several of the *pious Bishops*, particularly the celebrated *Arch-Bishop*, and divers other Persons of Quality, are Members; some of whom have shewn a Zeal, which if it prevailed the Three Kingdoms over, might soon produce a Glorious Reverse of the State they are now in, and which in less than Two Years space hath succeeded, tho' not without such various Oppositions, as might be expected, from Combinations of bad Men, to that degree in *Dublin*, that the *Prophanation* of the *Lord's-Day* by *Tipling* in *publick Houses*, by Exercising of *Trade*, and Exposing of *Goods* to Sale, is almost suppress; that *Lewd Women* are so strictly enquired after, and severely punished, that they have Transported themselves, as in *England*, to our *Plantations*; and that *Swearing* is so run down, that an *Oath* is rarely heard in their Streets; so that the publick Disorders are remarkably cured; and, in short, *Vice* is afraid and ashamed to shew its head, where within a few Years past it was daring and triumphant.

We are likewise assured, That *Scotland* hath concurred in these Matters, where His Majesties Proclamation against *Prophaneness* and *Debauchery* hath been issued out in very strict terms, and His late Gracious Letter to the Parliament of that Kingdom, takes notice of the Progress that they have made, in the Forming of Methods for the Discouraging of *Vice* and *Irreligion*, and assures them, *That 'tis a WORK most acceptable to Him.*

But to return to our own Nation. We are made acquainted, That many *Societies* and Bodies of Men, of different Ranks and Perswasions, are engaged in this Work, to which Men of Virtue, of Temper, and unblemished Reputation, may either join themselves, according to their Quality, Circumstances, or Opportunities, or may form themselves into new Bodies: That the publick Opposition that was made to it, which our Posterity may blush to read of, is at an end, which, 'tis to be hoped, will be the last that we shall hear of in a *Christian State*, and under a *Protestant Government:* That the *City* of *London* espouses it, where there are Two Sermons Quarterly Preached, and divers of them Printed, to make Men sensible of their Obligations in this respect. And it's true also, That *Swearing* is much lessened, as we have reason to believe, by the Accounts we re-

ceive

ceive in moſt, if not in all Parts of the Kingdom, as other publick Diſorders are in many; and that *Societies* for *Reformation* have been in divers Places already actually form'd, and are going on in many others; as particularly in *Glouceſter*, *Leiceſter*, *Coventree*, *Shrewsbury*, *Hull*, *Notingham*, *Tamworth*, *Newcaſtle*, *Liverpool*, *Cheſter*, and ſeveral other *Corporations*: ſo that in a few Months time, by the Methods that are now taking, there is reaſon to believe, that we ſhall hear of a very conſiderable *Progreſs*, in this Work from all *Parts* of the Nation. And now is this a Time for Men, that would be reckoned Chriſtians, to ſtand Neuters, in an Affair, wherein their Religion, their Country, and their *Poſterity*, are ſo deeply concerned? Let the Men who can contentedly ſee the Lawes of GOD trampled upon; who can, in their ordinary Converſation, in the Streets, and even at their own Tables, hear horrid Oaths and Curſes, nay, Men calling upon GOD for Damnation upon themſelves and others; in a word offering high Indignities to the Glorious Majeſty of their Great Creator, conſider whether the very Heathens, who would not ſuffer their Artificial Deities to be affronted, or their Religion to be deſpiſ'd; who in Sieges, and other Diſtreſſes from their Enemies, were more concerned for their Images, and Altars, than for their own Houſes, or private Affairs, do not condemn them? Let our Learned Rabbies, the great Diſputers of the World, and all that make a *Profeſſion* of Religion, but give litle better account of it than by expreſſing a fierce and uncharitable Heat againſt thoſe that differ from them in ſome things relating to Religion, but not eſſential to it, and wherein all Men equally wiſe and good have, I doubt, never yet been fully agreed, think ſeriouſly with themſelves, whether they might not employ ſome ſhare at leaſt of their *Parts* and *Zeal* to much better purpoſe, in furthering the Reformation of Mens Lives, and of the Manners of the Nation, by the Suppreſſing of *Prophaneneſs* and *Vice*, than by raiſing or keeping up, with an unchriſtian Temper, to the manifeſt Injury of the Chriſtian Religion, which is an Inſtitution of Love, dangerous or unneceſſary Controverſies or Diviſions, and making of Proſelytes to their New Opinions or Party; all Religions being, I think, agreed, that bad Men are a Scandal to the beſt Religion, and that they cannot, if they continue ſo, be ſaved in any; and conſequently, that the being inſtrumental in the bringing over of a few Souls to the ſincere Practice of Piety and Virtue by any Chriſtian Methods, which thoſe I am treating of will, I hope, be allowed to be, is of greater Service to the Chriſtian Religion, and the World, than the gaining of Hundreds that are vicious to any particular Church or Party. But can Men of Conſcience ſatisfy themſelves with complaining of the Iniquities of the Age, and wiſhing for *Reformation*, with giving only ſome good Words to theſe Proceedings, or even praying for God's Bleſſing upon them, without doing, as they have Opportunity, what is neceſſary to promote them, when, as it hath been ſaid, we have the Laws of GOD, and of the Nation, and, as we have reaſon to hope, the Government on our ſide; and moreover, ſo many Examples, and ſo great Succeſs, to encourage us, and have now, generally ſpeaking, not much more to fear than Calumnies and hard Words, and moſt of thoſe, 'tis to be hoped

from

from the Enemies of God and Goodneſs, which the beſt of Men, and the beſt Deſigns in all Ages, have ever met with, and which in ſuch a Caſe, it is our true Glory to ſuffer? Nay, ſurely this is a time, as I ſhall endeavour to make appear, for all good Men to join their Hearts and Hands, their Intereſt and Authority, in this ſo Neceſſary, ſo Great, and ſo Glorious a Work.

Afterwards the Author ſheweth, there are ſome orders of Men, under ſpecial obligations, to be Zealous and Diligent, in promoting a publick Reformation of *Manners*, from page 28. ſuch as 1mo. the *Clergie*. 2do. *Magiſtrates*, page 33. 3tio. *Inferior Officers as Conſtables* page 72. *Church Wardens, and Sideſmen, for giving Information.* page 74. and from page 75. *He ſheweth the neceſſity and duty of private Perſons, giving Information againſt Vice.* and page 79. That it is a Comprehenſive branch of Charity, and a Religious Office; when it is performed, as other Good Acts ſhould be, with pure intentions, upon proper occaſions, and with a Chriſtian temper and that they ſhould be encouraged, who do it and he doth to excellent purpoſe, excite and encourage thereto, and obviate diſcouragments, and ſhew the obligation that is to it, and the need of it, and how unexcuſable it will be, and how great the Sin and danger is, if having ſuch encouragement, Magiſtrates or Informers prove negligent.

From page 118. *He Addreſſeth to all ſorts of People*, 1mo. *The Nobility.* 2do. *The Clergie*, page 120. 3tio. *Magiſtrates of all kinds P.* 123. 4to. *Gentry and Commonalty.* P. 126. 5to. *To men of Religion and Vertue of all Ranks.* P. 147. *To them that are concerned in this Noble undertaking.* P. 159. *And laſtly ſheweth, from* p. 161. *That if this opportunity be loſt, we may fear we never have ſuch an opportunity put in our Hands again.*

The Account,

Of the Riſe, and Progreſs, of the Religious Societies, in the City of *London* &c.

And of Endeavours, for *Reformation of Manners*, which have been made therein:

By JOSIAH WOODWARD, *Miniſter at* Popler. *the Second Edition Enlarged, Printed at* London, Anno 1698.

AFter the Dedication, to the Citizens of *London*, the Author does, in an Introduction *Ch.* 1. Repreſent, how the good Education of Youth, is of great Concern, for Church and State; And that its the obſervation, of many ſerious and judicious perſons, that within the compaſs of theſe few years, there hath appeared, much of the

genuine

genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity, in many young perſons, whoſe pious diſpoſitions, together with their humble and inoffenſive behaviour, have occaſioned the praiſes of God, in the mouths of many people, who look on this blooming Piety of theſe orthodox and ſober perſons, as a very ſeaſonable Bleſſing of God, to excite new Spirits in the degenerat profeſſors of our holy Religion, and to antidote thoſe damnable Hereſies, and check that exorbitant wickedneſs, which hath appeared with ſuch impudence in thoſe latter days.

He ſheweth that his deſign of writing this account, was to revive the languiſhing ſtate of Religion, and to invigorate a hearty concern for it. And that ſince the firſt edition of it, he underſtood by letters, and converſation, that the piety of many, eſpecially of the younger ſort, had been enlivened thereby—— and that on this occaſion, it comes to be known, that in ſome places the very ſcope and deſign of theſe Societys had been begun and continued, by ſeverall pious perſons within theſe three or four years paſt, who knew nothing of theſe *London* Societys, nor had ſo much as heard of them by report.

The Author thinks it ſome ground to hope, that our infinitely gracious God is preparing the Way, to a more generall reformation of manners among them, then is yet viſible, partly by diſpiriting and intimidateing the Actors of vice and Prophaneneſs, who have hitherto been undauntedly bold and hardy in the Commiſſion of it; and partly by exciteing the Spirits of ſuch as oppoſe our publick Sins, even to a pitch of Bravery, which ſomewhat reſembleth theſe of whom it is ſaid in Scripture, that the Spirit of *the Lord came upon them:* of which he giveth diverſe Inſtances. And addeth, that its beyond queſtion, if ſuch as are of eminency in Church or State, Did more generally give their publick countenance to this Divine and Glorious Work, it would run on with Vigour, from one end of the Land, to the other: Which would tend to their Comfort and Glory, in the day of their Accounts, whereas Horrour and Confuſion will overwhelme ſuch, as either drowſily forget, or cowardly hide, or, baſely miſemploy the weighty Talents of Power and Authority.

He addeth that our Peace both affords a favourable Juncture for advanceing this great Work, and is a powerful obligation upon them, to ſett to it in good earneſt. And tha it's abſolutely requiſite, to juſtify the Sincerity of the days of our Humiliation, in which, by confeſſing the publick Sins of the Nation, and praying againſt them, we engaged to endeavour, to ſuppreſs them. He repreſents alſo the neceſſity of religious Aſſociations, in order to a general Reformation of Manners, and that there can be no Reaſon to ſuſpect danger, from ſuch who manifeſtly and profeſſedly purſue the chief ends, both of the Chriſtian Religion, and of all Civil Government, and who do all this in Methods ſtrictly legal, and propoſe the Maintenance, of the Authority, of the Laws of God and the Land as the End they aime at.

He ſheweth, that through the goodneſs of God, there are ſo many perſons, of various qualities, functions, and Authority, who heartily apply themſelves to this, as are not only ſufficient [under God] to make it ſubſiſt, but to prevail, in a great meaſure, even to a conſpicuous Abatement, of all manner of notorious Vice and Prophaneneſs.

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In *Ch* 2*d* he giveth Account, of the rise of these Societies, shewing that about 20 years ago, several young Men, of the Church of *England*, in the Citys of *London* and *Westminster*, were about the same time, touched with a very affecting Sence of their Sins, and began to apply themselves, in a very serious manner, to religious Thoughts, and purposes, and they often resorted to their Ministers for spiritual Advice and Comfort, and it fell out many times, that several of them mett together at the House of their spiritual Physician, and so contracted a little Acquaintance, by these providential Interviewes. Upon this it was advised, they should meet together, once a week, and apply themselves to good Discourse, and things, whereby they might edify one another, and for the better Regulation of their Meetings, several Rules and Orders were prescribed them. But the improvement of them grew up by degrees, as every thing doth by improvement.

At each of their meetings, they considered the wants of the Poor which in time amounted to such considerable Sums, as relieved many Familys, set at liberty many Prisoners, maintained many Orphans, and set them to Schools and Trades &c. And they chused two Stewards to manage their Charity. From this he takes occasion to recommend Christian Societies, to all sorts of men, with great earnestness, and especially as useful to Magistrates and Ministers to associate, for carrying on their arduous Work of regulating and reforming Mens Manners.

He shews, these young Men soon found the Benefite of these Conferences. Yet in the beginning of the late King *James's* Reign, when the Face of the Reformed Religion began to be clouded, and all private Meetings suspected, some to the great Grief of the rest, through fear fell off, but others were confirmed in their Zeal and Courage against the growing interest of Popery. But as they concealed their Names, from the Beginning, to shun Applause, so then they did it, for Caution to shun suffering, yea on that Account, by advice they did change the name of SOCIETY for that of CLUB. And instead of meeting in a Friends House, who might be endangered by it, they adjourned to some publick House or other, where they could have a Room to themselves, and under the pretext, of spending a shilling or two, they conferred seriously together, in the same religious manner as formerly; by which honest Artifice they carryed on their good Design; Without interruption, even to the end of that unhappy Reign.

In *Ch* 3*d* He giveth an Account, of the progress, of these Societies, and of their real aim and design. And here he sheweth, that tho their first design in this Religious Fellowship lookt no further, than the mutual Assistance, and Consolation one of another, in their Christian warfare: Yet as the sence of the Blessedness of Religion, and the Value of immortal Souls encreased, their compassion enclined them to endeavour, by discourse with their Acquaintance, in proper Seasons, to press upon them, these Divine Arguments, whereby themselves had been rouzed out of a state of carnal insensibleness, which was blessed with wonderful Success: Which may recommend good Discourse, on all proper Occasions, in company. Upon this they made a private Order, at one of their Assemblies, that every one should endeavoure to bring in one other, at least, into their Societie, which they

did to good effect. Thus they grew, and encreased, and, as they multiplyed, they erected new Societies, by the pattern of the old.

This Conspicuous advancement, in Number and Repute, gave occasion to some, mistaken or ill affected persons, to misrepresent these Societies, as things leading to Schism, spirituall pride, and many other ill consequences; which obliged them to appear, and justify their undertakeing, which they did, in a humble, and solid apology, meekly and fully answering, every objection, and utterly disclaiming all Schism and Faction, and shewing all Deference, to their Ministers.

To prevent their Revolting (as some, to the grief of others, had done) it is their practice to partake of the Holy Supper, of our Lord, as frequently as they may. And in order to their more advised preparation, for so solemn a work, there is in one Church, or more in *London*, a Sermon Preached every Lords Day, in the Evening (by the procurement of some of these Societies) on the important subject, of preparation for the Lords Table, and a meet deportment after it; by which, great good hath been done, and a deep sence, of Religion, wrought in many Persons.

He sheweth, there is a great Love amongst them, so that scarce any naturall Brothers, are so Vigorously affectionate, and sayeth, he has often beheld their meetting and parting Embraces, with admiration.

He saith, it's required, of such as desire to joyn themselves to them, that they give the Societie, a Solemn account of their sence of Sprituall things, with their motives, which lead them to this undertakeing, and what they seriously purpose as to their future Life. This is many times done in Writing, and he sayeth he hath perused some of their Papers, and found them penned, in such ane honest, affectionate and undisguised stile, with such pious and sensible expressiones, and in so modest and humble a manner, that they would mightily affect any pious Person, to read them, and move him to break forth into pathetick praises to God, who hath given such Grace to young Men, in so degenerate ane Age.

When ill People cast reproaches on them, they exhort one another, to humility and patience, and to resemble their Saviours silence under revileings; admireing that divine command of his, for returneing Blessing, for Cursing, and for endeavouring, to overcome evill with good.

This, (saith he) so far as humane eye can see, is the reall and only design of these Societies, who seem with one heart, to attempt, by the most pious, and peaceable methods, to put a stop to our overfloweing wickedness, remove our Plagues, and to dispose into a meetness, for the Blessings, and gracious presence of God: by whose Blessing they have of late Years, so increased, that there are, now 32. distinct Bodies of them, within the Compass of the BILLS of MORTALITIE. Besides these, erected in the Universitie of *Cambridge*, and City of *Gloucester*, and in various parts of *England*, and at *Dubline* in *Ireland*, where from two or Three Persons, with which they began, they are now increased, to

Nine

Nine or Ten Societies, containing about Three Hundreth Persons, who have been the mean of reviving a great sence of Religion, in many of the Inhabitants, of that City, and have begun a very hopefull Reformation, of Manners, among them.

In *Chap.* 4*th.* He giveth an account of their endeavouring, a publick Reformation of Manners.

Here take the Authors own words at least from *Page* 69. to *P.* 99.

OUR Associated *Young Men* had due Convictions of, and were sensible that it must needs be as great a Peice of *Charity*, to bring a prophane person by light and temporary Punishments to shun eternal Torment, as to bind the Hands of such distracted people as would otherways tear their own flesh, and be their own Murderers: And therefore they Were ready to do all that became them in their places, to check those *publick and scandalous Sins*, which were become very *insolent* and *crying* in this *City*. They only wanted some Directions to manage this Affair in a due Manner, according to the Law, and to be countenanced by some *Magistrate*, in a Work so proper to his Office, and so worthy of his regard. And it was not long e're a singular Providence of God gave them a favourable Opportunity, to express their Zeal for his Name in this Matter.

FOR, about this time, four or five Gentlemen of the Church of *England* [whose Names deserve to be had in perpetual esteem, tho I have not their leave to publish them here] falling into serious Discourse upon the melancholy Subject of the iniquity of the Times, came at last to a most brave and generous Resolution, to do all that they possibly could, by the Authority of our Laws, to chastise and suppress those impudent Vices and Impieties, which they saw very provoking in the sight of God, and very grievous to the Spirits of all good Men. And forasmuch as some of these Gentlemen had made the Knowledge of our Laws their Study; they collected an Abstract of our Penal Laws against Vice and Prophaneness, and drew up such prudential Rules, as are fitt for the Legal *Conviction* and *Prosecution*, of such as offend against them. And having (in the Year 1691.) by the Motion of the *Lord Bishop of Worcester*, obtained the *Queen's Pious Letter*, to the *Justices of Peace*, to act as it became them in this important Affair; and the Justices having made a very good Order thereupon, and the Lord *Mayor* and *Aldermen* doing the like: These Gentlemen caused Copies of all these to be printed, & to be sent all over the Kingdom, at their own great expence, & lodged Blank Warrants in many hands all over the City, for the Ease of Informers, and other Persons concerned; with many other excellent Expedients to further a general Reformation, which surely is the best of Works: Of which one of our pious Bishops has given an Account to the World, to the just Honour of these worthy Gentlemen, and to the shame of such as have reproached and opposed their Righteous and Religious Undertaking.

NOW, this fell in very fitly with the Dispositions of our Societies, who thereupon formed themselves into two considerable Bodies, for Information against publick Enormities, the one in *London*, and the other in *Westminster*, the better to advance this

this work in all parts, according to their respective places of abode. And thereupon they gave punctual Information to some Magistrate or other, of those publick Acts of Debauchery and Prophaneness, which they observed to be committed by persons hardned in their Sins; still keeping to the Direction of the Law, and the Rules subservient thereunto which those Gentlemen had given them.

BUT Wickedness being at that time insolent and unused to restraint, these Persons met with very outragious Resentments, and with bitter Reproaches and Threats from the passionate Lovers of Vice: Yea, they often ran the hazard of their Lives in the prosecution of this Design; which they underwent with Christian Courage, being supported (under God) by divers of our *Bishops* and *London Divines*, who told them, That if any of them suffer'd in so Divine a Work, they would very much resemble the Martyrs and Confessors of Christ, and receive the Reward of it in the other World. And in this respect, the *Right Reverend Bishop of Glocester*, and these worthy Divines Dr. *Horneck*, Dr. *Jekyl*, and Mr. *Edward Stephens*, have most eminently signalized their Zeal, for their Great Master and his Work.

AND whereas our *Young-men* found it very often objected in common Discourse, that they were only a few raw Youths that engaged in this Work, which seem'd particularly to exasperate the Persons prosecuted by them; they greatly wisht for the concurrence of some grave and elderly Persons to countenance, and enspirit in this difficult Enterprize.

TO This our Good God, who would not suffer this Excellent Work (undertaken purely for his sake) to drop, was pleased by his good Providence to administer a very seasonable Support. For it fell out about this time, that the good Service of several Men (most of them House-keepers) in the *Tower-Hamlets*, came to be known, which was begun on this occasion.

THE Inhabitants of those *Hamlets* being much perplexed by pilfering People, Pick-locks, House-breakers, and such ill Persons; some of them began to enquire into the Places which were suspected to harbour that sort of People. And by treaceing out their Places of Resort, they soon dyv'd into the true source of their Grievances; namely, That these vicious Persons living in shameful *lewdness* and *idleness*, and having no Income by Trade or Estate to maintain them in it, they betook themselves to *Robbery*, *Shoplifting*, *Burglary*, and *picking of Locks* and *Pockets*, to maintain their expensive Lusts and lewd Companions.

UPON this, some of the sober Inhabitants of these *Hamets* set themselves with great Concern, and undaunted Courage, to pull down the very Nests of these Disorders. They got Warrants for Search, and brought all suspected Persons to clear themselves in a legal way, and where it was requisite, they demanded Security for their Good-behaviour; they prosecuted and suppress all known Houses of *Bawdery*, and brought the Keepers of them, to legal Punishment. And whereas some of those who engaged in this Work were of the *Publick Communion* and others of different perswasions, their lesser Differences in Matters of *Religion*, did not in the least divide them in prosecuting of these things which they

saw

ſaw were directly contrary to all Religion. And ſuch as did not act perſonally in this Affair, yet perceiving the Good that came of it, were enclined to contribute towards it.

BUT there were ſome things wanting in this Undertaking, in the defect of which it was much retarded, and had like to have ſunk. The one was a methodical way of proceeding, for want of which their Endeavours were neither ſo orderly, nor ſo effectual as they afterwards proved. They alſo wanted a more compact Incorporation of their Members into one Society or Body which might be moved and guided by the ſame prudential Methods, as if they all proceeded from the ſame Soul. And laſtly, their Fund was low, and inſufficient to defray the Expence of ſuch an Affair. For, ſince the apprehenſion of lewd Ruffians, and deſperate Bullies, needed a good number of Officers and other Aſſiſtants; and ſince the *Proceſs* of our Law is not a litle chargable, it muſt be allowed, that Money is the Sinews of this War, as well as others.

NOW our aforeſaid Societies for giving of Informations, having conſidered theſe Circumſtances, and having admired the *Zeal* and Courage of thoſe honeſt and excellent Men in theſe Hamlets, and obſerved how well they ſuted to make up what themſelves wanted in Years and Experience, they reſolved to concur with them, that their united Forces might be the more victorious: And the Gentlemen before mentioned gave their hearty Conſent to the Match, and (like kind Fathers) did not a little augment the Dowry.

AND now their Reſolved Work went on with happy Succeſs, the one emulating and puſhing on the other. And in all Caſes they acted regularly, and in conformity to Rules approved by the Learned in the Law. They choſe two Stewards to keep their Caſh, and to keep an exact Account of all Contributions and Deburſements. They had a ſet place of Aſſembling together, in which they obſerved a regular Method of Propoſing, Debating, and concluding every thing; and had a Notary on all Occaſions to attend them: and finally, at this weekly Meeting, they concerted thoſe Meaſures which they proſecuted with Vigour in the City and Suburbs, and with very great Succeſs.

FOR they were inſtrumental in putting down ſeveral open Markets that had been keept on the Lord's Day; and in ſuppreſſing ſome Hundreds of Houſes of ill Fame, bringing the Frequenters of them to due ſhame, and Puniſhment. And by the means of this Society alone, about 2000. Perſons have been legally proſecuted and convicted, either as keepers of Houſes of Baudery and Diſorder, or as Whores, Night-walkers, and the like; and the Names of theſe Delinquents are ſet down in Three Black Liſts which they have Printed: All which have been ſentenced by the Magiſtrates as the Law directs, and have accordingly been puniſhed, (many of them diverſ times) either by Carting, Whipping, Fining, Impriſonment, or ſuppreſſing their Licences.

THEY have alſo been inſtrumental to put down ſeveral Muſick-Houſes, which had degenerated into notorious Nurſeries of lewdneſs and Debauchery: As it appeared by a Paper *Printed* on this occaſion, wherein it was proved, that ma-

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ny Persons had been ensnared by the rude Company which usually resorted to those Houses, to the Ruine of their Honour; and some to that utter extirpation of Modesty, that some of both Sexes had shamelessly danced naked in these licentious Brothels; which Disorder had abounded to that degree, that above twenty Murders had been committed in them within a very little time. All which must needs render them odious in the Eyes of all sober People.

BESIDES this, the Members of this Society have legally convicted multitudes of notorious Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and Drunkards: and their Procedings in all these Cases have been so strictly legal and unblamable, that they have for several Years past received great Countenance in several Courts of Judicature; and have found very considerable Encouragement from the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, who have honourably contributed towards the great Expence of so great and useful an Undertaking.

BUT yet these Endeavours, of so general a Good, did not proceed without many a Rub; if it had, it would have been the first time that Virtue had been advanced, with Ease and Smoothness. We must have concluded, that either Virtue or Vice had lost it's Nature if the one could supplant and dethrone the other without passionate Opposition: Yea we might have thought, that the *Devil* had lost his Envy to the Good of Mankind, or that all the Legions of the *Infernal Pit* had been cast into a deep sleep, should they have suffer'd such a brave Onset, to be made upon the Territories of *Darkness*, without making all the interest they had against it. It was therefore no wonder at all, that the Undertakers of this Divine Work met with many Difficulties, to struggle with, in the Prosecution of it.

IN truth, they Experienced not only the rude Assaults of licentious *Debauchees*, which they expected; but too often the Brow-beatings, and discouragement of such, as were bound, by the tremendous Bond of an *Oath*, and the Divine Trust of *Authority*, to do otherwayes, which was the more difficult to bear.

I have known the Day, in which several Persons, have with extream Sorrow complained, that they had spent above half of it, in going from the House of one *Justice of Peace* to another, before they could get a Warrant signed. Such Complaints were too frequent, and alas! too true.

BUT there was great Hope of a full Redress to this Grievance, when there came forth a Pious Proclamation, from their Majesties, Jan. 21. 169½ *Requiring all Magistrates, Ecclesiastical and Civil, in their respective Stations, to Execute the Laws of this Realm against Prophaneness and Immorality, as they would answer it to Almighty God, and upon Pain of their Majesties highest Displeasure; complaining also* (most justly) *That by a long continued Neglect and connivance of the Magistrates and Officers concerned, these dissolute Enormities had universally spread themselves, to the dishonour of God, and the scandal of our Holy Religion*, &c. This Proclamation was occasioned *by the pious Address of our Arch-bishops and Bishops to their Majesties*, as the Preamble of it declares.

AND since this did not fully accomplish its End, it was followed (*May* 16. 1693.) by a personal Excitation of the Justices of *Middlesex*, to further this

this work with Vigour, by the Lord *Keeper* in a Speech made to them to that purpose, by her Majesty's special Command: and partly by these Supports, but chiefly by the good hand of *God* upon it, this Enterprize has gained Ground, notwithstanding the many ill turns that have been done it

INSOMUCH, that there are now near twenty Societies of various Qualities and Functions, formed in a Subordination and Correspondency one with another, and engaged in this Christian Design in and about this City and Suburbs. All which have their set Hours and Places of meeting, to direct, support, and execute this their Undertaking.

In this Number of the Societies for Reformation here given, I do not include any of the thirty two Religious Societies before mentioned. For tho they all agree in the love of Vertue, and dislike of Vice, yet their first and more direct Design of Association seems to be distinguish'd thus: In that the Societies for Reformation bent their utmost Endeavours from the first to suppress publick Vice; whilst the Religious Societies endeavour'd chiefly to promote Religion in their own Breasts, tho they have since been eminently instrumental in the *Publick* Reformation. The former endeavour'd to take away the Reproach of our Religion, by curbing the Exorbitances of its *Professors*: the Latter attempted to retrive that Holy Vigour in the Practice of Religion which becomes Christians. And whereas these Latter are all of the *Church* of *England*, and fervent Lovers, and strict observers of her Publick Worship; the former are composed of all such as bear a hearty Indignation against Vice and Impiety, tho of different Perswasions in some Circumstantials of Religion. For in this Case, the Members of our Church do not say to any Lovers of Piety, as *Zerubbabel* to the Adversaries of *Judah*, *Ye have nothing to do, to build with us*: For they consider Vice as an Enemy to human Nature, and as tending to the ruine of the whole World. We do therefore, with humble Thankfulness to Almighty God, acknowledg the Brotherly Assistance which is given us by some of our Dissenting Brethren (especially those of the *Presbyterian Perswasion*) in endeavouring to discountenance and suppress publick Enormities, which have been so generally spread, and so long taking Root, that they need the help of all Hands to pluck them up. And it is not only in *London*, but in *Nottingham*, *Shrewsbury*, and other Parts, that they join hand in hand with those of our Communion, in order to suppress the Vices of the Place. It is God that maketh Men of one Mind in a House, much more in a Nation: and I beseech the God of Peace to bring all that sincerely love and fear him, to perfect Peace and Coalition: For this we pray incessantly in our *Publick* Service, wherein we entreat the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would bring all such as profess his Holy Name, to agree in the Truth of his Holy Word, and to live in Unity and godly Love. When once this shall come to pass, we may hope that the Enemies to the Fundamental Principles and Practices of our Holy Religion, being covered with Shame, may seek unto God. and then (as an eminent *French* Refugee observed) *will the English Church and Nation be thrice Happy*.

THESE Endeavours, to stop the wide mouth of our crying Sins, have (by

the Bleſſing of God) ſo far ſucceeded, that the Impudence of lewd Women, and the Blaſphemies of Licentious Tongues are manifeſtly abated in our Streets, and the works of Darkneſs ſeem to be retiring to their proper Scene, the obcureſt Corners that can be found, as moſt remote from human Obſervation aud Puniſhment.

BUT the baniſhment of Vice from the publick View, is not all the Good that has been done by theſe legal Proſecutions, (tho that is moſt highly valueable, as it takes away publick Scandals and Temptations) but there have been many Inſtances of perſons apprehended in ill Houſes, and Company; who having ſomething of Modeſty and Tenderneſs remaining, have been alarmed out of this ill way of Life, and have afterwards acknowledged the Mercy of God, and the Charity of Men, in pulling them as *Firebrands* out of the *Fire*.

AND indeed, ſince the *Magiſtrates* chaſtizing of wicked People is an Ordinance of God, it is ſcarce to be queſtion'd but that it is deſigned for the Spiritual Good of particular Men, as well as the publick Good of Societies: and what doubt can there be, but that God does many times turn ſuch legal Corrections to infinite Advantages? The *Magiſtrate* is the Civil Parent: and as God has commited the *Sword* to him to cut off intolerable Miſcreants, ſo has he given him a *Rod* to chaſtize Offenders in leſſer Matters: and to him methinks we may as well apply the words of *Solomon*, as to the Natural Parent (Prov. 23. 14) *Thou ſhalt beat him with the Rod, and ſhalt deliver his Soul from Hell.* Which if duely conſidered, would ſerve to quicken *Magiſtrates* in this glorious Work of ſaving the Souls of Men from *eternal Torments* (which would bring a great ſhare of their Glory into their own Boſoms.) And it would alſo tend to allay the paſſionate Reſentments of ſuch as fall under the Correction of the *Magiſtrates Diſcipline*, if they did but foreſee that invaluable kindneſs of ſtopping their way (tho with Thorns) to prevent their running into the infernal *Pit*. O that Men had Faith to make a due Eſtimate of theſe certain and neceſſary Conſequences of things! which a few Moments wil exemplify upon every Soul of us in *Eternal Bliſs or Torment*.

IT was the deep ſenſe of theſe great Things, which firſt engaged the Hearts and Hands of thoſe few Pious *Gentlemen* in this moſt Noble Work, who do not now (bleſſed be God) act alone in it. Several other *Gentlemen* and eminent *Citizens* are now incorporated with them; and they meet frequently to ſuperintend, direct, and purſue this beſt of Works (as one of our Pious *Biſhops* calls it) conſulting the beſt and moſt adviſable Methods to carry it on, ſpending a great deal of time weekly, and ſometimes daily in it, and furthering it by very large and honourable Contributions. Aud by theſe meaus many thouſands of vicious and prophane Perſons have been brought to juſt *Puniſhment*; to which the late excellent Law againſt *profane Swearing* and *Curſing* has been very ſerviceable: and were it but enlarged in a Line or two, to make the Work of *Information* eaſier, it would ſoon baniſh the *Helliſh* ſenſeleſs Sin of *Blaſphemy* out of this Nation, as alſo out of the Kingdomy of *Ireland*, where it is likewiſe made a Law, and is Very

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vigorously put in Execution: concerning which a *Person* of Quality Writes thus from *Dublin*, in a Letter to his Freind in *London*, Octob. 28. 1697.

'THE Reformation goes on in this *City* very vigorously: When we were presented with a *Thousand Warrants* against profane Swearing, by a Gentleman 'from *London*, it was thought we should never have needed more: but those have 'all been put in Execution, and we are now upon printing a third *thousand* of 'them more. The last *Lord's Day*, I believe there were eight or nine Pounds levied 'in *Ale-Houses*; and above a Hundred *Bakers* have paid within this last Quarter 'for prophaning the *Lord's Day*, in the Business of their Trade, besides *Taylors* 'Dyers, and others; and *Bawdy-Houses* and *Whores* are hunted down with a 'high Hand. *Bridewel* is filled with them, and this without any great Assistance 'from the *Magistracy*. Some Persons of our *Societies* being put upon the *Grand-*'*Jury* for the City, do it effectually: ten or twelve lewd Women have been 'taken up in a Night, in the Houses as well as Streets; and this twice or thrice a 'Week. But I must add however, that this *Reformation* in every part of it, is be-'holden to our Recorder, who shews more Zeal and Application to it, than ever any 'Magistrate in *London* or *Middlesex* has done, since I have been acquainted with 'these Matters.

THERE is also a *Society* of this kind in *Drogheda* in *Manouth*, and in *Kilkenny*: and several *Divines* are endeavouring to plant them in other parts of the *Kingdom* of *Ireland*, But I return nearer home.

TO awaken a just sense of the Necessity of *Reformation* of Manners in the City of *London*, there are four Sermons in the Year preached on this weighty Subject at *Bow-Church* in *Cheapside*; namely, on every Monday next following the four usual *Quarterdayes*, about Eleven in the Morning: And the like is done by *Dissenters* on four other Days.

AND by the Blessing of Almighty God upon these Endeavours, a very considerable sense of *Religion* has been revived In many of this *Nation*, and a very conspicuous Check given to *Debauchery*. Insomuch that the general *Odium*, and the threatning Dangers of informing against Vice and Profaneness are almost extinguisht, and the blessed Work of *Reformation* set into such an excellent and successful Method, that the outward part of it would soon be effected, would but some few in every Street or Parish, who are of Place and Power, pull their Hands out of their Bosoms to engage in this honourable and necessary *Work*; or would others, who are of Ability, but contribute as it becomes them, towards the Expence of it. For the apprehending of lewd People, (as was before observed) and the prosecution of them in the course of our Law is very chargeable; insomuch, that near a *thousand Pounds* have been expended in this Work by one of these *Societies* alone, within the space of the last four years: As it may be proved by their book of Accounts, to any one that desires it for any good End.

AND that none may be discouraged on the account of the general Overflowing of Vice, and the disproportionable fewness of Hands engaged to put a stop to it; let it but be considered, that the chief part of this Opposition to Publick *immor-*

ality has been occaſioned by the meeting of four or five private Perſons together; who duely conſidering and bewailing the Height and Extent of the Sins of this Nation, came to a Reſolution of doing their utmoſt to oppoſe it, in the due courſe of our Laws. An attempt which, methinks, ſeemed as Generous and Heroick, as that of *Jonathan* and his *Armour-bearer*, who being inſpirited by God, reſolved to attack a whole Army of *Philiſtins* encampt on a vaſt Hill: But the *Lord of Hoſts* who led them on in this noble Enterprize, did ſucceſsfully carry them them thorow it, to the utter Diſcomfiture of thoſe numerous Enemies of God. And ſince we may without raſhneſs conclude, that this Effort againſt publick Sins has the ſame *Original* with that of *Jonathan*, we hope, it may at laſt attain the ſame End, tho this Attempt againſt numerous and heightned Enormities has as great Diſadvantages as that, in humane Eſtimate.

O! what a Field of Honour lies here, before all *Perſons* among us! In which *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters* are more eſpecially concerned to be *Leaders*, who are by their Offices deſigned to direct the Conſciences, and regulate the Converſations of Men. I beſeech the Almighty and All-good God to inſpirit and determine them effectually to this Work, to which he loudly calls them, a Work abſolutely neceſſary, not only to our Proſperity, but Subſiſtence; and for want of which we are almoſt undone.

AND in truth, the Glory of Almighty God, and the Support of our Church and State, are ſo manifeſtly concerned herein; that I cannot ſee how the *Miniſters of Juſtice*, or of *Divine Service*, will be able to anſwer the unchriſtian Neglect of it, before the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (the Judge of All) before whoſe *Judgement-Seat* we muſt all appear, and that very ſpeedily. Where two *Armies* are engaged in a bloody and uncertain Battel, how will thoſe *Regiments* anſwer it to their *Prince*, who ſtood by and idly lookt on, without ſtrikeing one hearty ſtroke in his Cauſe, to whom they vowed a *Military Faithfulneſs* to their Death? But above the reſt, how will the *Officers* of thoſe daſtardly Troops anſwer it to their *Soveraign*, who dreaded a little Danger and Hardſhip in his Service, more than his *Royal Diſpleaſure*?

AH Sirs! if we are now backward to contribute our utmoſt Endeavours in our ſeveral Stations towards the ſuppreſſing thoſe impudent and ſcandalous Vices, whereby our *God* and his *Holy Religion* are ſo outragiouſly blaſphemed: If we prefer carnal Eaſe, the Favour of Men, or any worldly Intereſt, before the Honour of our God, and the Propagation of Religion: What inſupportable Shame, Horrour and Regret will at laſt ſeize us, and for ever torment us! And therefore I again beſeech the *Holy Spirit* to excite and fix in us all (even in *Magiſtrates*, *Miniſters*, and all Ranks of *People*) a vigorous and effectual Zeal for his Holy Name and Will; and a juſt Concern for the languiſhing Repute of the *Chriſtian Name*, and of the *Reformed Religion*.

AND as for all thoſe various Degrees of Men, who have already ſet their Hands to this excellent Work, may they never ſlacken their Hands, or pull them back. Let me entreat them to act in it with a Zeal, Conſtancy and Purity of Intention, ſutable

ſutable to ſo Divine an Employment as that they engage in, to ſo great and good a Maſter as they ſerve, and to that infinite Reward which they may expect. Be not ſuch Enemies to your ſelves, as to be *weary of well-doing*, ſince in a ſhort *time you will reap, if you faint not.*

O Chriſtians! Look unto Jeſus, who not only *underwent the Contradiction of Sinners*, but *endured the Croſs*, and *deſpiſed the Shame, for the Glory which was ſet before Him.* Remember, that as a *Curſe* is threatned to ſuch as *do the Work of the Lord negligently*: So a *Crown* is prepared for thoſe *who are faithful unto Death.*

THE time of our Warfare is but ſhort, and the Difficulty of it will be much ſweetened by the *promiſed Comforter*, the Reward of well-doing will be of infinite Value, and eternal Duration. And as no Work in the World will be more commended of our Supreme Judge at laſt, than this of Reformation; ſince he himſelf *ſits as a Refiner's Fire, and as Fullers Soap*, to Purify and cleanſe his People from their Sins: and ſince he will e're long conſume that Reprobate *Silver*, which is not effectually refined by thoſe means of *Purification* which he hath ordained: On all theſe accounts, I ſay, we have no Concern upon Earth ſo great, as to acquite our ſelves well in this our Spiritual Calling, not *being ſlothful, but diligent Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.*

AND here I cannot but call upon our *Diſſenting Brethren*, that as they have manifeſted a Chriſtian Spirit in aſſiſting us to ſuppreſs Vice, they would do no leſs in endeavouring to diſcountenance Strife, and to reſtore Unity. And let me entreat them, even by the Bowels of our common *Lord and Saviour*, that they ſtudiouſly endeavour to diſpoſe their Young Ones, to follow after things which make for *Peace, Unity and Order*, (the deſire of which ſeems deeply impreſt on the Spirits of our *Societies* of Young Men) that the Church of God may enjoy more peaceable and flouriſhing Days in the next Age, than it has in this

Afterwards he exhorts, every *Miniſter*, to endeavour to Plant and erect one ſuch Societie, in his Pariſh, which would be a Pious nurſery, a mean of unity and a great help of Charity, giveing ſeveral inſtances, of their Charity, and the good effects of it. He commends alſo their devotion and reverence in it; And recounts ſeverall remarkable providences, whereby it hath pleaſed God, to further this divine work. And then ſheweth, the danger of not accepting, encourageing, and furthering, ſuch means of Reformation.

In the *5th. Chap.* He giveth a ſpecimen of the orders of the Societies, before mentioned.

Which may be ſet down *Verbatim*, as in Print. from *P.* 120. to P. 130.

A Specimen

A Specimen of the ORDERS *of the* SOCIETIES *beforementioned.*

I.

THAT the ſole *Deſigne* of this *Society* being to promote real Holineis of Heart and Life: 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. It is abſolutely neceſſary that the Perſons who enter into it, do ſeriouſly reſolve to apply themſelves in good earneſt to all means proper to *make them wiſe unto Salvation.* *Joſh.* 24. 15. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15.

II

THAT in order their being of *one Heart and one Mind*, *Rom.* 15. 5. 6. *Phil.* 2. 2. In this Deſign, every Member of this *Society* ſhall owne and manifeſt himſelf to be of the *Church of England*, and frequent the *Liturgy*, and other publick Holy Exerciſes of the ſame. 1. *Pet.* 2. 13. And that they be careful withal to expreſs due Chriſtian *Charity*, *Candor* and *Moderation* towards all ſuch Diſſenters, as are of good Converſation. *Eph.* 4. 2. *Rom.* 12. 18.

III.

THAT the Members of this *Society*, ſhall meet together one Evening in the Week, at a convenient place, in order to encourage each other in *Practical Holineſs*, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 14. *Rom.* 14. 19. By diſcourſing on Spiritual Subjects, and reading God's Holy Word; and to pray to *Almighty God*, *Pſal.* 34. 3. and praiſe his Name together.

AND to this Aſſembly any ſerious Perſon may be admitted, upon Requeſt.

IV.

THAT at ſuch Meetings, there be no hot Diſputes, about Controverſial Points, State-Affairs, or the Concerns of Trade and Worldly things: *Rom.* 15. 6. But that the whole Bent of the Diſcourſe be to *glorify God*, *and edify one another* in *Love*. *Eph.* 4. 16.

V.

THAT it be left to every Perſons Diſcretion to contribute at every Weekly Meeting, what he thinks fit towards a Publick Stock for Pious and Charitable Uſes: 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. And the Money thus Collected ſhall be kept by the two Stewards of the *Society*, (who ſhall be choſen by Majority of voices once a year or oftner) to be diſpoſed of by the conſent of the Major part of the *Society*, for the Uſes abovementioned. And the ſaid Stewards ſhall keep a faithful Regiſter of

of what is thus Collected and Distributed, to be perused by any Member of the *Society*, at his Request.

V I.

THAT any respective Member may recommend any Object of Charity to the Stewards, who shall (with the Consent of the rest) give out of the Common Stock, according as the Occasion requires. And in a Case of extraordinary Necessity, every particular Person shall be desired to contribute further, as they shall think fit.

V I I.

THAT every one that absents himself four Meetings together, (without giving a satisfactory Account to the Stewards) shall be lookt upon as disaffected to the *Society*.

V I I.

THAT none shall be admitted into this *Society*, without giving due notice thereof to the Stewards, who shall acquaint the whole *Society* therewith. And after due enquiry into their Religious Purposes and manner of Life, the Stewards may admit them to subscribe their Names, if the major part of the Society allows of it, and not otherwise. And with the like joint Consent, they may exclude any Member proved guilty of any Misbehaviour after due Admonition, unless he gives sufficient Testimony of his Repentance and Amendment, before the whole *Society*.

I X.

IT is hereby recommended to every Person concerned in this *Society*, to consider the many Inconveniencies, (and many times Sins) which attend *Ale-House-Games*, and wholly decline them. *Gal.* 5. 13 And to shun all unnecessary resort to such Houses and Taverns, and wholly to avoid lewd *Play-Houses*. 1 *Thess.* 5. 22.

X.

THAT the respective Members of this *Society*, shall heartily endeavour, through God's Grace;

1. To be *just* in all their Dealings, even to an exemplary Strictness 1 *Thess.* 4. 6.
2. To *pray* many times every Day: Remembring our continual dependance upon God, both for Spiritual and Temporal Things. 1 *Thess.* 5. 17.
3. To partake of the *Lord's Supper* at least once a Month, if not prevented by a reasonable Impediment. 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. *Luke* 22. 19.
4. To practise the *profoundest Meekness and Humility*. *Mat.* 11. 29.
5. To watch against *censuring* others. *Mat.* 7. 1.

6. To

6. To accuſtom themſelves to *holy Thoughts* in all places. *Pſal.* 139. 23.

7. To be helpful one to another. 1 *Cor.* 12. 25.

8. To exerciſe Tenderneſs, Patience, and Compaſſion towards all Men. *Tit.* 3. 2.

9. To make Reflections on themſelves when they read the *Holy Bible*, or other good Books, and when they hear Sermons. 1 *Cor.* 10. 11.

10. To ſhun all foreſeen Occaſions of *Evil*: 2 *Theſſ.* 5. 22. As evil Company, known Temptations, *&c.*

11. To think often on the different Eſtates of the *Glorified* and the *Damned*, in the unchangeable Eternity, to which we are haſtening *Luke* 16. 25.

12. To *examine* themſelves every Night, what *Good* or *Evil* they have done in the Day paſt. 2 *Cor* 13. 5.

13. To keep a *private Faſt* once a Month, (eſpecially near their approach to the *Lords Table*) if at their own diſpoſal; or to faſt from ſome Meals when they may conveniently. *Mat.* 6. 16 *Luke* 5. 35.

14. To mortify the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts. *Gal.* 5. 19 24.

15. To advance in *heavenly mindedneſs*, and in all *Grace*. 1 *Pet.* 3. 8.

16. To ſhun *Spiritual Pride*, and the Effects of it, as Railing, Anger, Peeviſhneſs, and Impatience of Contradiction, and the like.

17. To pray for the whole *Society* in their private Prayers. *Jam.* 5. 16.

18. To read pious Books often for their Edification, but eſpecially the *Holy Bible*: *John.* 5. 39. And herein particularly,

Mat. 5. 6. 7. Chap. *Luke* 15. 16. Chap. *Rom.* 12, 13, Chap. *Eph.* 5. 6. Chap. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. Chap. *Rev.* 1. 2. 3. 21 22, Chapters.

And in the *Old Teſtament*, *Levit.* 26. Chap. *Deut.* 28. Chap. *Iſa.* 53. Chap. *Ezek.* 36. Chap.

19. To be continually mindful of the great Obligation of this ſpecial Profeſſion of Religion; and to walk ſo circumſpectly, that none may be offended or diſcouraged from it by what they ſee in them; nor occaſion given to any to ſpeak reproachfully of it.

20. To ſhun all manner of Affectation and Moroſeneſs; and be of a civil and obliging Deportment to all Men.

XI.

THAT they often conſider [with an awful dread of Gods Wrath] the ſad Height to which the Sins of many are advanced in this our Nation; and the bleeding *Diviſions* thereof in *Church* and *State*. *Mal.* 3. 16. *Judg.* 5 15. And that every Member be ready to do, what, upon conſulting with each other ſhall be thought adviſcable, towards the puniſhment of publick *Prophaneneſs*. according to the good Laws of our Land, required to be put in Execution by the *Kings* and the late *Queens* ſpecial Order. *Deut.* 13. 8. *Levit.* 24. 11.

XII.

THAT each Member ſha'l encourage the Catechizing of young and ignorant People in their reſpective Families, according to their Station and Abilities:

Deut.

Deut. 6. 7, *Josh.* 24. 15. And shall observe all manner of Religious Family-Duties.

XIII.

THAT the major Part of the *Society* shall have power to make a new Order to bind the whole when need requires; if it be approved by a pious and learned Minister of the *Church of England*, nominated by the whole *Society*.

XIV.

THAT these Orders shall be read over at least four times in the Year by one of the Stewards; And that with such deliberation, that each Member may have time to examine himself by them, or to speak his Mind in any thing relating to them.

XV.

LASTLY, That every Member of this *Society*, shall [after mature deliberation, and due trial] subscribe his Name to these Orders; to express his Approbation of them, and his Resolution to endeavour to live up to them. In order to which, he shall constantly keep a Copy of them by him

In the *6th. Ch.* He giveth the reason of this publication, of the orders and designe of these Societies, to witt, that having found, by discourse with several Persones (who have greatly rejoyced to hear of any publick good, sett on Foot) that they never before heard of these Societies, which greatly commended their Christian modestie. He conceived therefore, it might probably conduce, to the Enlargement of these Societies, and to engage the Prayers of good People, on their behalfe, to give some publick account of their Constitution, Designe, and Orders, all which have been approved by diverse eminent Divines.

In *Ch. 7th.* He gives account, how the chief objectiones which have been made against these Societies, have been considered and answered, by some, of their Members.

In *Ch. 8th.* There is an admonition, to the Members, of these Societies, wherein they are with much seriousness exhorted, and excited, to deport themselves, so, that a sincere Lover of Religion, may with honour, plead for them.

In *Ch. 9. th.* There are directions for Religious conferences; and here he adviseth that an orthodox and pious Minister, should be chosen by each Society to be present frequently, at their Assemblies, to preserve Order, excite Zeal, and resolve doubts: this would obviat many objectiones, concerning them, and would greatly benefite, countenance, and recommend such Assemblies.

It's Recommended, that they be very punctual to their hours of meeting, and begin with Prayer, after some excitation to it. And then he setts down 40. heads of practicall Religion; One of which at the Close, of every weekly Assembly, may be proposed, as the subject to be discoursed of, At their next conference; that they may the better prepare for it, by reading, meditation, and Prayer, but the discourse, of 12. severall Weeks in the Year, is reserved, to be

 spent,

ſpent, on the ſubject, of the Lords Supper, which every Member is obliged, by the orders of the Society, to receive (where he may with convenience) 12: times in the Year

The Fourtie heads, of conference are theſe following.

1. The Duty of Self-examination, required 2. *Cor.* 13. 5.
2. The Duty of Self-abaſement, and Self-renouncing, required *Mark* 8. 34.
3. Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *Mark* 16. 16.
4. Evangelical Repentance, 2. *Cor.* 7. 10.
5. Effectual Converſion to God, *Acts.* 26. 18.
6. Truſt in God, 1. *Tim.* 6. 17.
7. Mortification, *Rom.* 8. 13. *Gal.* 5. 24.
8. Humility, *Epheſ.* 4 2.
9. Chriſtian Hope, 1. *Pet.* 1 3
10. Chriſtian Charity, 1. *Cor.* 13 1. *&c.*
Including the Love of God, *Mark* 12. 30.
And the Love of Men, *Ver.* 31.
11. Alms-deeds, *Mat.* 6. 1. 2. 3. 4.
12. Contentment, *Phil.* 4. 11.
13. Juſt-dealing, 1. *Theſſ.* 4. 6.
14. Government of the Tongue, *Mat.* 12. 36. 37.
15. Prayer and Praiſe, 1. *Tim.* 2. 1.
16. Chaſtity, *Mat* 5. 27. 28.
17. Temperance, 1. *Cor.* 9. 25.
18. Patience, 1. *Pet.* 2. 20. 21. *&c.* Meekneſs, *Tit.* 3. 2.
19. The Publick Worſhip of God, *Pſalm* 42. 2. 4.
20. Heavenly-mindedneſs, *Col.* 3. 1. 2 And Contempt of the World, *Gal.* 6. 14.
21. Of Chriſtian Prudence, *Mat.* 10. 16.
22. Family-Duties, *Joſh.* 24. 15. Or Religious Houſe-hold Government, *Acts* 10. 2.
23. Subjection to Magiſtrates, *Titus* 3. 1.
24. Peace-making, *Mat.* 5. 9.
25. Of Reproof, *Lev.* 19. 17.
26. Sanctifying the Lords Day, *Numb.* 15. 32. *&c.*
27. Growing in Grace, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18.
28 Improvement of Opportunities of Doing and Receiving Good, *Acts.* 10. 38.
29. Duty of Parents and Children towards each other, *Epheſ.* 6. 1. 2, 3. 4.
30. Of the Husband and Wife, *Epheſ.* 5. 22. to the end.
31. Of Maſters and Servants, *Epheſ.* 6. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.
32. Of People to their Paſtors, *Heb.* 13. 17.
33 Of preparing for, and watching in the Performance of all Religious Exerciſes, *Heb.* 12. 28. 29.
34. The Duty of Chriſtians to Enemies, *Rom.* 12. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21.
25 Of endeavouring the Converſion and Salvation of others, 1 *Tim.* 2. 3. 4.
36. The Senſe of God's Omnipreſence, *Pſalm* 139.

37. Of

37 Of reading the Holy Scriptures, *Deut.* 6. 6. 7. 8. 9. 2. *Tim.* 3. 16.
38. Of Meditation, 1 *Tim.* 4. 15.
39 Of Circumſpection, or Watchfulneſs, *Mat.* 24. 42. 43. *&c.*
40. Perſeverance, *Rev.* 2. 10. *Jude. ver.* 24.

And it is adviſed, that at the time of conference, the Director if preſent, or in his abſence, one of the Stewards; Propoſe the following Queſtiones, for the ſake of method, and that every ones diſcourſe, may be the more directly practical, to which, they are alſo adviſed:

The Queſtiones, are as followeth.

I. *Queſt.* Wherein conſiſts the Nature of this Duty?

II. *Queſt.* What Directions do you propoſe in order to make the Practice of it more ſure, and more eaſy?

III. What Diſcouragements do any of you find in the Practice of it?

IV. What Motives may encourage our Practice of this Duty, and our Perſeverance in it?

IF the time permits, ſuch Motives as theſe may be toucht upon, *viz.*

1. The Authority of God commanding.

2. The Goodneſs of God, promiſing both to aſſiſt and reward the Diligent.

3. The Terribleneſs of Gods Threatnings, and the Examples of his Wrath ſometimes ſeen upon Earth; and the dreadfulneſs of the everlaſting Vengeance of an Almighty God, in the fierceneſs of his Wrath in the other World.

4. The Excellency of the Duty it ſelf.

5. The Examples of Good Men, who have gone before us in the Wayes of God.

6. The Bleſſed Reſt and Peace of a good Conſcience; and the previous Hell of a bad one.

It's alſo propoſed as expedient, that no Perſon ſpeak above Three or Four Sentences, without a convenient pauſe, to give room to others, to ſpeak their mind, and in caſe of ſilence, he may proceed, but with the ſame Caution.

The Conferences, being ended, it is adviſed, that one of the Stewards may read ſome ſelect ſentences, of Scripture, and an Admonition, to raiſe up, and engage to Faith, And fervencie in Prayer: Theſe are contained in the two laſt Chapters, together with diverſe Prayers, for diverſe occaſiones.

F I N I S.